



**Homeland  
Security**

# Fact Sheet: U.S.-Mexico Land Borders

## **US-VISIT: GOALS**

- Enhance the security of our citizens and visitors
- Facilitate legitimate travel and trade
- Ensure the integrity of our immigration system
- Protect the privacy of our visitors

## **US-VISIT: AN OVERVIEW**

US-VISIT is a top priority for the U.S. Department of Homeland Security because it enhances security for our citizens and visitors while facilitating legitimate travel and trade across our borders. US-VISIT helps to secure our borders, facilitates the entry and exit process, and enhances the integrity of our immigration system while respecting the privacy of our visitors.

US-VISIT is part of a continuum of security measures that begins outside U.S. borders and continues through a visitor's arrival and departure from the United States. It incorporates eligibility determinations made by both the Departments of Homeland Security and State.

In those cases where a visa is issued by the Department of State, biometrics such as digital, inkless fingerscans and digital photographs allow the Department of Homeland Security to determine whether the person applying for entry to the United States is the same person who was issued the visa by the Department of State. Additionally, the biometric and biographic data are checked against watch lists, improving the Department of Homeland Security's ability to make admissibility decisions as well as the Department of State's ability to make visa determinations.

Biometric identifiers help us freeze a visitors' identity so that we may match the visitor with his/her travel documents. Biometrics protect our visitors by making it virtually impossible



for anyone else to claim their identity should their biometrically-enhanced travel documents (such as a visa) be stolen or duplicated.

US-VISIT entry procedures are currently in place at numerous land, air and seaports with international arrivals.

Entry procedures will be deployed to the remaining land ports of entry by December 31, 2005. A list of the 50 land ports of entry where US-VISIT has been implemented can be found in Appendix A.

Additionally, biometric exit procedures are operating in several airports and seaports and will be tested at additional land border crossings beginning August 4, 2005.

As US-VISIT moves toward fulfilling its vision for an automated entry-exit system at the land border ports of entry into the United States, US-VISIT is continuing to improve the border management system by planning tests of radio frequency identification (RFID) technology at the U.S. land border.

## **US-VISIT: WHO IS PROCESSED AT THE LAND BORDERS**

### **Applicability to International Visitors**

Today, international visitors (with some exemptions), including visitors traveling under the Visa Waiver Program, applying for admission at U.S. land borders must complete arrival/departure Form I-94, usually issued in the secondary inspection area. The secondary inspection includes US-VISIT processing: the collection of 10-finger scans on an inkless device and a digital photograph. US-VISIT procedures at land ports take only seconds during the secondary inspection process. Additionally, with the deployment of US-VISIT, visitors will no longer have to complete the Form I-94 by hand. The visitors' biographic information will be entered electronically when the officer scans the travel document.

- For international visitors renewing their multiple-entry Form I-94. All current, valid Forms I-94 remain in effect and the US-VISIT biometric collection requirements will apply to foreign visitors either at the time of the next issuance of the Form I-94 or at any time at the discretion of the Customs and Border Protection Officer.

*NOTE: Customs and Border Protection Officers always have the discretion to refer a visitor for US-VISIT processing as part of the inspections process if there is a concern about the nature of travel.*

### **Applicability to Mexican Citizens**

- Most Mexican citizens who travel to and from the United States regularly use a multi-use travel document, B1/B2 visa/Border Crossing Card (BCC), also known as a "laser visa," which serves as either a BCC or a B1/B2 visa. Initially, these Mexican citizens who use the travel document only as a BCC will not be subject to US-VISIT procedures.



This is an interim solution for the land border while the Department explores a long-term solution to record the entry and exit of visitors crossing our land ports of entry.

- As the next phase of US-VISIT is implemented at land ports of entry, if a Mexican citizen chooses to use the BCC as a B1/B2 visa (traveling outside the “border zone” and/or staying longer than 30 days in the United States), he or she will be processed through US-VISIT at the land border secondary inspection areas.
- Mexican citizens who participate in SENTRI (Secured Electronic Network for Travelers’ Rapid Inspection) and/or FAST (Free and Secure Trade) will not be enrolled in US-VISIT until they are required to re-register as part of the routine processing to renew a multiple-entry Form I-94.
- Multiple-entry Forms I-94 will be issued as before, with virtually no changes. All current, valid Forms I-94 remain in effect and the US-VISIT biometric collection requirements will apply either at the time of the next issuance of the Form I-94 or at any time at the discretion of the Customs and Border Protection Officer.
- Children under 14 and persons over the age of 79 are exempt.

*NOTE: Customs and Border Protection Officers always have the discretion to refer a visitor for US-VISIT processing as part of the inspections process if there is a concern about the nature of travel.*

## **US-VISIT: USING NEW TECHNOLOGIES**

- The Department of Homeland Security continues to work closely with the Department of State, building on the biographic and biometric collection that is underway at U.S. consulates around the world. All visa-issuing posts are now collecting biometric data from visa applicants.
- The Department of Homeland Security is working in partnership with the private sector to identify entry-exit solutions that work in the unique land border environment.

## **US-VISIT: FACILITATING LEGITIMATE TRAVEL AND TRADE**

- As US-VISIT moves toward fulfilling its vision for an automated entry-exit system at the land border ports of entry into the United States, RFID technology offers a solution for a potentially faster, biometrically enabled entry-exit operation.
- Using an automatic identifier, RFID technology can detect a visitor at distance and provide primary inspection with entry information as well as provide a mechanism for an accurate and timely record of exits without requiring visitors to interrupt their travels by stopping or even slowing down to check out.



- RFID technology testing will begin August 4, 2005, at the Pacific Highway and Peace Arch in Washington state; Alexandria Bay in New York; and the ports of Nogales East and Nogales West in Arizona; The testing or “proof of concept” phase is expected to continue through the spring of 2006.
- Participants at the test locations will be the same travelers who already require a Form I-94 to enter the United States.
- The testing process is electronic and largely transparent to travelers, allowing them to enter and exit the port at current speeds, without any additional stops.
- US-VISIT will assure that our visitors’ information is always protected. The RFID technology used by US-VISIT will safeguard sensitive information because it will read only a code that links to visitors’ information securely stored in a database. It will also be tamper-proof and difficult to counterfeit or surreptitiously read.

## **US-VISIT: RESPECTING PRIVACY AND THE ENVIRONMENT**

- US-VISIT has published a Privacy Impact Assessment that ensures that personal information is used appropriately, protected from misuse and improper disclosure, and destroyed when no longer needed. This will be updated as necessary.
- Personal data will be securely stored and is made available only to authorized officials on a need-to-know basis to help protect the nation against those who intend harm to U.S. citizens or visitors and to ensure integrity in our immigration system.
- A US-VISIT privacy officer is available to answer questions or resolve concerns and may be contacted by sending an email to [usvisitprivacy@dhs.gov](mailto:usvisitprivacy@dhs.gov), or by writing to the Chief Privacy Officer, Department of Homeland Security, Washington DC 20528, USA, ATTN: US-VISIT Appeal. Information on the US-VISIT privacy program is available at [www.dhs.gov/us-visit](http://www.dhs.gov/us-visit).
- US-VISIT complies with all environmental laws and regulations.



## APPENDIX A

### 50 Busiest Land Ports of Entry (By FY-02 Estimated Crossings)

#### Arizona

Douglas, Douglas  
Lukeville, Lukeville  
Nogales East, Nogales  
Nogales West, Nogales  
San Luis, San Luis

#### California

Andrade, Andrade  
Calexico East-Imperial Valley, Calexico  
Calexico West, Calexico  
Otay Mesa, San Diego  
San Ysidro, San Diego  
Tecate, Tecate

#### Maine

Calais-Ferry Point Bridge, Calais

#### Michigan

Detroit Ambassador Bridge, Detroit  
Detroit-Windsor Tunnel, Detroit  
Port Huron – Blue Water Bridge, Port Huron  
Sault Ste. Marie, Sault Ste. Marie

#### Minnesota

International Falls, International Falls

#### New Mexico

Santa Teresa, Santa Teresa

#### New York

Champlain, Champlain  
Niagara (Lewiston-Queenston, Whirlpool  
and Rainbow Bridges), Niagara  
Massena, Rooseveltown  
Peace Bridge, Buffalo  
Thousand Islands Bridge, Alexandria Bay

#### Texas

Bridge of the Americas/Cordova Bridge, El Paso  
Brownsville/Matamoros Bridge,  
Brownsville  
Columbia Solidarity Bridge, Laredo  
Convent Street (or Gateway to the Americas  
International Bridge), Laredo  
Del Rio International Bridge, Del Rio  
Eagle Pass Bridge I, Eagle Pass  
Eagle Pass Bridge II, Eagle Pass  
Fabens, Fabens  
Gateway International Bridge, Brownsville  
Hidalgo, McAllen  
Lincoln-Juarez Bridge, Laredo  
Los Indios, Los Indios  
Los Tomates/Veterans International Bridge,  
Brownsville  
Paso del Norte Bridge, El Paso  
Pharr, Pharr  
Presidio, Presidio  
Progreso, Progreso  
Rio Grande City, Rio Grande City  
Roma, Roma  
World Trade Bridge, Laredo  
Ysleta-Zaragoza Bridge, El Paso

#### Vermont

Derby Line, Derby Line

#### Washington

Blaine-Pacific Highway, Blaine  
Blaine-Peace Arch, Blaine  
Lynden, Lynden  
Point Roberts, Point Roberts  
Sumas, Sumas

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